

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 160

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 146

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 160—Relative to sea level rise.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 2, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 160, Gordon. Sea level rise.

The measure would encourage state agencies to communicate with the public, local, regional, and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations and businesses regarding the risks of sea level rise and the development and implementation of adaptive and protective measures to address those risks, and other impacts of climate change. This measure would encourage the Ocean Protection Council to work with the California Coastal Zone Management Agencies, the State Lands Commission, other state agencies, and nonstate partners to consider establishing goals and planning principles to help prepare the state's shoreline and coastal community for the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise.

WHEREAS, The sea is rising and weather is becoming more extreme. In fact, the county's longest continuously operating gauge of sea level, at Fort Point in San Francisco Bay, recorded a seven-inch rise in sea level over the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, As a result of California's changing climate, sea level rise is projected to accelerate during this century. A 2012 report from the National Research Council found that the average sea level rise projections for California are an additional six inches by 2030, 12 inches by 2050, and 36 inches by 2100; and

WHEREAS, Three quarters of the state's 38 million people live near California's 1,100 miles of coastline and San Francisco Bay's additional 500-mile shoreline; and

WHEREAS, Among those affected by sea level rise are large numbers of low-income people and communities of color who are especially vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, Coastal waters, waterfronts, bays, ports, harbors, marinas, wetlands, estuaries, riparian areas, and beaches are important environmental and economic resources of California; and

WHEREAS, Sea level rise and other extreme weather events threaten water supply and California's agriculture by causing saltwater intrusion into the state's freshwater sources, including, but not limited to, the Delta and coastal aquifers; and

WHEREAS, Critical existing infrastructure in California, including, but not limited to, roads, hospitals, schools, emergency facilities, wastewater

treatment plants, and power plants, and new development on the coast and on the San Francisco Bay is vulnerable to sea level rise; and

WHEREAS, Sea level rise threatens public access to the coast and its recreational areas; and

WHEREAS, Beaches, wetlands, streams, and other natural habitats that benefit wildlife and communities along the coast require protection, restoration, and enhancement due to the effects of sea level rise; and

WHEREAS, The Assembly Select Committee on Sea Level Rise and the California Economy was established last year to thoroughly review the challenges ahead in addressing the expected impacts of sea level rise on the state and its economy; and

WHEREAS, The Assembly Select Committee on Sea Level Rise and the California Economy held four hearings throughout the state to examine the effect of sea level rise on various sectors and industries. Topics at those hearings included projected impacts on coastal agriculture, the fishing and aquaculture industry, tourism, ports, airports, roads and bridges, and water and power infrastructure. The committee also examined the existing authority of state agencies regarding the state's preparedness and response to anticipated sea level rise; and

WHEREAS, State agencies have already begun to address this critical issue. For example, in December 2013, the Natural Resources Agency released a draft of the Safeguarding California Plan that identified climate risks to California's oceans, coastal ecosystems, and coastal resources and provided state guidance for reducing those risks; and

WHEREAS, State, local, and private action is needed to plan and design for coastal resiliency and long-term coastal sustainability; and

WHEREAS, State, local, and private action is needed to protect public health and safety and public and private coastal and San Francisco Bay infrastructure, ports, public facilities and services, jobs, and economic assets; and

WHEREAS, State, local, and private action to protect coastal resources from the impacts of climate change may provide additional public benefits, including, but not limited to, flood protection, improved water quality, and increases in fish and wildlife for food and recreation; and

WHEREAS, Although adapting to sea level rise and other extreme impacts of climate change will be expensive, that price will be far lower than the alternative of waiting and reacting to these impacts as they occur; and

WHEREAS, Extensive cooperation between state, local, and private entities is needed to adequately respond to the effects sea level rise and climate change; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature encourages the Ocean Protection Council, in its convening role, to work with the California Coastal Zone Management Agencies (the Coastal Commission, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and the State Coastal Conservancy), the State Lands Commission, other state agencies, and non-state partners to consider establishing coastal climate adaptation goals and planning principles

to help prepare the state's shoreline and coastal communities for the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, coastal erosion, and extreme storm-related events. The establishment of these goals and planning principles would implement a recommendation from the Safeguarding California Plan to form a state coastal leadership group on sea level rise to help guide state activities, enhance agency coordination, and facilitate adaptation strategies; and be it further

Resolved, That state agencies are encouraged to engage and communicate with the public; local, regional, and federal agencies; and nonprofit organizations and businesses regarding the risks of sea level rise and the development and implementation of adaptive and protective measures; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.